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FCC

Re: BITS legislation

As a volunteer Public Access Television producer since 1996, I value Public Access Television highly as a critical form of self-expression both for myself and for my community, self-expression essential for any nation to function and succeed as a public entity. We need Balance of Power to succeed as a nation, or we will fail.

And the BITS legislation that failed in November and is being pushed through Congress behind closed doors is one of numerous attempts of some secretive few to seize power from the many. But we are a nation "of, by, for All" and need to listen to those voices of the many, to guarantee affordable access to media for public representation, listening that will take time and effort and seem messy, not so easy, cheap, quick as corporate CEO decisions to value private profit over the public good.

Some assume erroneously, evidently, that private profit justifies all, but it does not. Our private cash system counts little more than some private bank accounts, and fails to account for the riches of our community and of nature that give real meaning to any life, such as the smile of a child. Public Access Television and other public channels documents those moments when commercial stations fail.

And the evidence is clear that corporate conglomerates fail to inform our publics of public information critical for the many to protect its self from profiteers, such as those profiteering from the war in Iraq.

We need Public Access, Educational and Government Access channels in our communities to keep our communities and constitutional democracy alive in this time of unprecedented secrecy in our White House. And now the White House is preparing to axe even Public Television, to kill Big Bird. Why? To crush dissent?

I called Senator Steven's office earlier and was told that BITS legislation was to eliminate

"obscenity" on those channels, but that is not a very good argument for a number of reasons, and that response seemed to be engineered to hide the real intent of the BITS legislation, the hearings for BITS that have been closed to public input.

I believe that the BITS legislation is part of a larger scheme to block public access to public airwaves when the airwaves belong to the public, as this administration has also blocked public access to public information systematically while spying on Americans without a warrant or even notifying FISA. Outrageous.

I demand that you call and/or write to me to let me know if any legislation such as BITS has been tacked onto any other bill without media attention, or if any other actions have been taken that will block public access to public airwaves. Thank you.

Private profit does not justify all, but this legislation has been engineered to benefit private corporations and private CEOs that will profit from conglomeration, consolidation, privatization and deregulation of my airwaves ...at public taxpayer expense.

And, our communities and our children need a world that nurtures us, not that crushes us, that enables the many to find the voices of their own communities. As a parent and a student of child development, I know that both children and communities need freedom of open expression and the ability to ask questions, free expression free from fear of "retaliation" (Downing Street Memos, 2002) for the many, for the diverse and access to affordable mediums to do that, to accomplish enough to feel good, to grow and develop normally into productive adults and creative, prosperous communities. A study recently found (2005) that more creative communities become more economically prosperous communities. But I guarantee that fear kills creativity.

And we need public television, Public Access, Education and Government channels and Public Television and Public Radio as critical tools to produce public peace and creativity enough, to prosper. If we limit our public world to private bank accounts, our nation will fail.

Private profiteering at public expense may fill some private bank accounts of some secretive few now, but will rob our nation of the nurturing public infrastructure that we need to survive as a constitutional "democracy."

Manhattan Neighborhood Network advises that:

- In most communities, " the noncommercial PEG TV channels deliver more original locally-made shows than all the commercial television stations combined. We need to protect localism in the media.
- PEG TV channels reflect the diversity of local communities. They provides noncommercial programming for seniors, for the disabled, for youth, multi-lingual programming for ethnic communities, and others that are often neglected by the commercial media.
- In many communities, PEG provides the only coverage of local government. Eliminating PEG will reduce the opportunity for citizens to stay informed about local government issues.
- PEG and local public access centers are the only means by which individuals and non-profit organizations can freely or affordably access the tools and training to produce their own programming and to express their own point-of-view through the media.
- Democracy works best when the widest range of ideas and opinions are circulated. PEG TV is a rich "marketplace of ideas", and plays a important role in our democracy."(MNN, 2006).

Please listen to the need to protect our public's rights because if you do not, then our nation will fail: Disparate nations become desperate nations, stuck in the deadly ruts of war. We need successful skills of self-expression to negotiate for peace.

I have been amazed to find that many that go to Washington DC decide not to protect the public interest, though officially "public representatives".....failing to represent the public and causing a "consitutional crisis," instead (Gore and Barr, 2006).

As a public representative, you have a responsibility to represent "the public" and to listen to the words of the many and to protect those who cannot speak for their selves, including your children's childrens' children generations from now.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Holly Berkowitz